

SENATE BILL REPORT

HJM 4012

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Environmental Quality & Water Resources, March 30, 1999

Brief Description: Requesting Congress to pass legislation to restore and revitalize federal funding for the land and water conservation fund.

Sponsors: Representatives Regala, Eickmeyer, Buck, Clements, Anderson, Veloria and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environmental Quality & Water Resources: 3/23/99, 3/30/99 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & WATER RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Morton and Swecker.

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Background: The Land and Water Conservation Fund was created in 1964 for two purposes: (1) to fund land acquisition for the four principal federal land management agencies (the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management); and (2) to provide matching funds to states for outdoor recreation projects.

Revenues for the fund are derived primarily from royalties on oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf, federal outdoor recreation user fees, the federal motorboat fuel tax, and surplus property sales. Congress has authorized an annual revenue stream of \$900 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, but this amount has never been fully funded. In recent years, no funding at all has gone to the state and local portion of the program.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund has funded the acquisition of millions of acres of park land, water resources, wildlife habitat, and open space, and the development of 37,000 state and local projects across the nation. Washington and other states lack adequate funding for fish and wildlife protection and management, especially for species which are not hunted or fished.

Summary of Bill: Congress is petitioned to restore and revitalize federal funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and to create a new dedicated fund for state level fish and wildlife management.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: Congress has never fully funded the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Full funding would provide significant resources for the conservation of land, as Congress has only appropriated \$344 million of authorized \$900 million. This has the potential of raising \$30-35 million for Washington State.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Michael O'Malley, WDFW; Tom Buckley, Teaming with Wildlife; Ron Shultz, National Audubon Society; Joe LaTourrette, Americans for DUV Heritage and Recreation; Bill Robinson, Trout Unlimited.